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A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE FINE ARTS. No. IV.



THE COTTAGE GIRL. FROM A PICTURE BY GAINSBOROUGH.

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SKETCH OF THE PROGRESS OF MODERN PAINTING.

Ecstatic she diffused
 The canvases, seized the pallet, with quick hand
 The colours brew'd: and on the void expanse
 Her gay creation pour'd, her mimic world.
 Poor was the manner of her eldest race,
 Barren and dry: just struggling from the taste
 That had for ages scared in cloisters dim
 The superstitious herd: yet glorious then
 Were deem'd their works; where undeveloped lay
 The future wonders that enrich'd mankind,
 And a new light and grace o'er Europe cast.
 Arts gradual gather streams. Enlarging this,
 To each his portion of her various gifts
 The goddess dealt, to none indulging all;
 No, not to Raphael. At kind distance still
 Perfect it stands, like Happiness, to tempt
 The eternal chase. In elegant design,
 Improving nature: in ideas fair,
 Or great, extracted from the fine antique;
 In attitude, expression, airs divine;
 The sons of Rome and Florence bore the prize
 To those of Venice she the magic art
 Of colours melting into colours gave
 Theirs too it was by one embracing mass
 Of light and shade, that settles round the whole,
 Or varies tremulous from part to part,
 O'er all a binding harmony to throw,
 To raise the picture, and repose the sight.
 The Lombard school, succeeding, mingled both.—THOMSON.

INTRODUCTION.

In presenting to our readers a general view of modern painting, we must commence our narration by adverting to that period marked by the decay of every liberal art, and the general neglect of literature, which immediately preceded the division of the Roman empire; for it is by contemplating the corruption of all taste, and the strange mingling together of Roman, Greek, and Oriental art, prevalent in that dark age, that we learn to make due allowance for the gross or feeble attempts of early artists in the Christian era. And how could art flourish where tyranny, vice, and civil war, alternately reigned? Of forty emperors, who from the second to the fourth century had struggled for and obtained the diadem, twenty had been murdered by the army and the people; so that the removal of the seat of empire by Constantine only completed that destruction of the art in Italy, which numerous causes had long combined to effect.

Yet it is also to the age of Constantine, when Christianity became the religion of the state, that we must look for those feeble glimmerings which announce the dawn of modern art. It is not surprising that there should have existed among the early Christians a certain degree of repugnance to the practice of the arts, bound up as they long had been with the emblems of heathen worship. The moral feeling of the people had taken a decided turn with regard to painting and sculpture, so that images and pictures were admitted with caution, and carefully separated from all connexion with religious worship. But in the time of Constantine, when Christianity was, as it were, grafted on Paganism, and everything was done to moderate the prejudices of the heathen world, and to bring them to tolerate, if not to conform to, the practices connected with the Christian religion, splendid commissions were given by the emperor to Greek and native artists for pictures of Christ, the Virgin, the prophets and the apostles. "But what were the results," it has been asked, "to painting? Nothing, absolutely nothing, to guide anybody except the antiquary; and if any evidence were wanting to show that the genius and the patron must exist together, the end of Constantine's splendour would abundantly supply it." The peculiar state of feeling at this period greatly shackled the artists in their task. The early Fathers, fearful of producing unnecessary collision with the pagans, who had been used to all the beauties of Grecian art, were reluctant to exhibit the representation of a suffering Saviour, and a painful cross, and therefore employed allegory largely in their paintings. There was also much diversity of opinion as to the method of representing the person of Christ. The Greeks always aimed at beauty,

but the Fathers of the Church preferred a representation of agony and suffering. The paintings, in whatever style, could not justly claim any merit as being portraits of our blessed Saviour, for St. Augustin declares, that in his time no faces of Christ or of the Virgin were known, and that no pictures were painted of them before the Council of Ephesus. Nevertheless, there are seven pictures now in Rome, reported to be originals, four of which are said to be by St. Luke's own hand.

Thus art had been kept alive by the Christian church, though encumbered with much barbarism, and it is found that native painters had sprung up in different parts of France and Germany. "Though darkened," says Dr. Memes, "the human spirit was still at work; and when at length its energies were restored to comparative activity by the slow operation of causes, imperceptible in themselves, mighty in their results, the arts shone forth among the morning stars in the dawn of freedom." The illustrious Charlemagne did all in his power to raise the state of the arts in his time. He made it a law that churches should be adorned with paintings, and thus confirmed the practice which many popes in succession had rendered common. But Charlemagne sent his agents every year to see that the law was obeyed, for it was his object, beside the advancement of the art, to obliterate the remembrance of the splendid altars of the pagans, by still more magnificent Christian ornaments. Though painting suffered at the death of Charlemagne, yet it was still kept alive through the instrumentality of the monks and the bishops. Religious painters sprung up all over Europe, and even Dunstan, archbishop of Canterbury, is said to have been a "skilful painter." In the tenth century, tapestry, for a time, took the place of painting, though many painters are spoken of as living at that time. Strutt tells us, that historical commemorations were much employed in England, and the Duchess of Northumberland adorned Ely Cathedral with a series of pictures illustrating the deeds of her distinguished lord.

SECTION 1.

DECIDED SYMPTOMS OF THE REVIVAL OF PAINTING.

The first decided symptoms of the revival of painting took place about the year 1066, when Greek artists were sent for to adorn several of the cities of Italy. Florence is generally considered the first of these cities that established a school for painting, though several writers make mention of a school for each of the fine arts, established at Pisa, as early as the eleventh century. Cimabue, a Florentine, early in the thirteenth century, caught the inspiration from the Greek artists employed by order of the magistracy, and soon equalled their works. He was both a painter and an architect, and though he originally studied under Greek artists, yet he soon departed from their manner. He began to study nature, and corrected the rectilinear forms of his design, gave expression to the heads, folded the drapery, and grouped his figures with considerable art. He did not excel in graceful subjects, such as madonnas and angels, but he succeeded admirably in heads full of character, especially those of old men. His pupil Giotto was even more successful. Giotto was a shepherd-boy; a sheep drawn by him from nature, on a stone, attracted the notice of Cimabue, and led him to take the boy to Florence, and give him instruction. Giotto soon surpassed his master. Through him symmetry became more chaste, designs more pleasing, and colour softer than before. One picture still bears the name of this artist. It is in the church of Santa Croce, and is a fine composition, though remarkable for the peculiar cast of the countenances in it. The god-son and pupil of Giotto also helped to adorn that edifice, while the works of Andrea di Cione, at once a painter, poet, and architect, were exhibited in the Campo Santo at Pisa, and in Santa Maria Novella. There is a remarkable picture still hanging up in the cathedral at Siena, representing in a number of small compartments the life of Christ. It was executed about the year 1308, by Duccio di Buoninsegna, and gives a high idea of the artist's powers. Petrarch speaks of Simone di Martino, or Memori, a pupil of Giotto's, as being the rival of that master's fame. Orcagna, Uccello, Massolino, and others had their share of fame, but in the middle of the fifteenth century all former names were

forgotten in the merits of Massaccio. This artist died at the early age of twenty-four, but may be said to have created a new era in the history of modern art. "He gave to painting truth, expression, light, and shade." The Brancacci chapel, in the Carmelite church at Florence, still contains his frescoes, and will long be visited with interest on that account, and also as having been the early school of Da Vinci and Buonarrotti. Massaccio had acquired perspective from Brunelleschi, and had long studied the remains of ancient sculpture at Rome. From his works it is evident that he had made a great advance in diversifying the positions and characters, and had paid more attention to anatomy than his predecessors. There is often an elegant and graceful expression about his heads, and considerable freedom and simplicity in the arrangement of his drapery. The colouring of his picture is also good, and exhibits truth, variety, and delicacy. About this time the resources of art were greatly increased by the discovery of oil painting, ascribed to Van Eyck, of Bruges, and also by the illusion of aerial perspective, added by Ghirlandajo.

These aids did not remain unimproved by artists of that period. Were we to give a list of the names of those who are spoken of as being eminent about the close of the fifteenth century, we should only weary our readers with a crowd of names that have long since given place to others of more importance to the art. Among the latter the name of Leonardo da Vinci stands deservedly high. This artist was born in 1452, and we cannot better describe him than in the words of Dr. Menes: "The genius of this extraordinary man seemed as a mirror, receiving and reflecting in added brightness every ray of intellectual light which had yet beamed upon the age. Philosopher, poet, artist, he anticipated the march of three centuries; proving in his own instance what the unshackled energies of man would then accomplish. Yet—and that too by a living historian of most deserved reputation—has Leonardo been represented as a dabbler in various knowledge, a proficient in none,—a laborious idler, wasting time and talent in useless multiplicity of pursuit. This apparently has been done to exalt his great contemporary and successor; but history ought not to be written as a picture is painted, touching in under-tones, what are deemed secondaries, that the light may be more conspicuously directed to a principal figure. At the shrine of art the devotion of Da Vinci was neither devoid of fervour nor unfruitful; albeit he courted, and not unsuccessfully, the favour of science, then new and dear to the aspiring mind. His true rank is not only among the fathers, but the masters of the art; he is one who not merely preceded, but excelled. His cartoon of horsemen in the battle of Pisa formed a favourite study of the greatest masters; and, in competition, Michael Angelo produced another of Soldiers arming in haste after Bathing; which even his admirers say, he scarcely ever equalled. Yet was Leonardo not vanquished. The Last Supper, painted in fresco at Milan, exhibited a dignity and propriety of expression, a correctness of drawing then unequalled; and, if seen as originally finished, probably still unsurpassed." In addition to his great attainments as an artist, Da Vinci was a discoverer in optics and mechanics, and a writer on scientific subjects. By his means the river Adda was rendered navigable for two hundred miles, and his hydraulic works on that river remain to the present day. He spent much time in scientific experiments, and in his writings he says, "Experiment is the interpreter of nature's secrets, and never misleads us. Our reason may sometimes deceive itself, therefore we must consult experience, and vary the circumstances in our experiments until we can draw from them general rules; for it is from hence only that these rules are to be derived." This artist died in France, in 1519.

Lorenzo da Credi was a fellow pupil with Da Vinci, and imitated his style. He painted with great tenderness and purity of feeling. The most successful imitator of Leonardo da Vinci is said to have been Bernardino Luini, his pupil.

We now come to notice the singular and wonderful genius of Michael Angelo Buonarroti, who united the professions of painter, sculptor, architect, poet, and musician. Of his attainments as a sculptor we have already spoken in our Supplement on Sculpture, and great as these may appear, they are not only equalled, but, in the opinion of many excelled by his powers in painting. Architecture and sculpture had formed his principal studies up to the period of his receiving orders to complete the paintings in the Sistine chapel at Rome. Comparatively ignorant of painting as a separate science, and wholly unacquainted with the mecha-

nical processes, he formed the designs (which was an easy task to him), and entrusted the execution to artists procured from his native city of Florence. But their performance gave him so little satisfaction, that he dismissed them all, and "rising in the strength and perseverance of indomitable genius, he resolved to begin art anew, and to depend henceforth solely on his own resources." Michael Angelo shut himself up in the chapel, prepared the materials with his own hands, and after repeated trials and failures, which he endured with unconquerable patience, he finally triumphed, and achieved in the course of years, one of the most adventurous undertakings of modern art. To the same pen which has so ably sketched the artistic character of Da Vinci we are indebted for the following notice of Buonarroti's works and genius, and also for other judicious observations which will be found in the course of the following pages. "The walls and ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, with the picture of the Last Judgment, executed thirty years afterwards, form the principal, almost the sole, works of Michael Angelo in painting. The latter is the greatest work of modern art, being fifty feet high by forty wide, and containing upwards of three hundred figures, many of which are larger than life. Here the human form appears under every variety of position, and agitated by every gradation of feeling; and over the whole is diffused a living ease—a science—a magic power—a fascination which constrains us to gaze with wonder, astonishment, admiration, but not with interest or sympathy. Similar are our feelings in every other example; nor can this be exactly charged as a defect. Michael Angelo formed a system for himself—he stands alone in his art—an ideal abstraction of mind was the object of his imitation, to which all living nature, elevated into gigantic forms and energetic modes, was to be moulded in subservience. His art was creative, not imitative—standing forth in its own independence of aim.

"Hence there are two relations in which the works in painting of Michael Angelo are to be examined, and according to which his merits will be very differently estimated. Viewed in themselves, the frescoes in the Vatican present astonishing evidence of human power. Every thought is grandeur and strength; and the rapid, fervent execution, arms the pencil with an omnipotence of art equal to all the modifications of form. Here the whole is perfect, inimitable; within this his own walk, Buonarroti has no compeer—'second to none, with nothing like to him.' But when the same works are considered with reference to the general principles of imitation, and as deriving value according as they reflect the archetypes of elevated nature, those very qualities which formerly constrained our approbation become startling blemishes. The ideal is found to consist solely in the imaginative; sublimity is sought too exclusively in the vehement to be always dignified. All is action—all participates of an unquiet and too aspiring character of composition; every form, every muscle, every attitude, exhibits the very gladiatorship of art,—for each is displayed, exerted, involved to the utmost. Even repose is anything save rest. Yet in difficulty apparently insurmountable, constraint is not perceived; the execution, wonderfully facile, though too prominent in general effect, gives to each giant limb of the awful and gloomy shapes the very effect of life and movement." Marcello Venusti, one of the pupils of Michael Angelo, painted from drawings of his master, and the designs of the great artist are supposed to have furnished the groundwork of some of the paintings of Sebastian del Piombo; an instance of this is thought to occur in the Raising of Lazarus, now in our National Gallery.

The next great name is that of Raphael Sanzio, of Urbino, son of Giovanni Sanzio, himself a painter. Raphael was born in 1483, and died on his thirty-seventh birth-day, worn out, as we are told, by "dissipation and excess of work." How often, alas! when we look into the private history of men, who have astonished the world with their skill in some one of the arts, and have won for themselves such appellations as "the Divine," are we compelled to mourn the excesses and the weaknesses which stamp their character as human, and as unpurified from the corruptions of humanity. Raphael seems to have been almost idolized by his companions, and a great favourite in circles where his youth and natural temperament exposed him to numerous temptations. Raphael was the founder and master of the Roman school. He was equally renowned for the tenderness and sweetness of his female forms, which have never been rivalled, and for the power and grandeur of his larger works. His productions were numerous, and consist of easel pictures in oil,

cartoons, and frescoes, exhibiting also three different manners. In the space of only twelve years, Raphael completed the frescoes of the Vatican and the Farnesina, besides others, amounting to many hundred figures, designed the cartoons, and produced those exquisite paintings in oil which contributed to spread his fame throughout and beyond Italy; at the same time cultivating architecture, poetry, and sculpture. Those who have seen the works of Raphael will fully join in the following encomium: "All that imagination could lend to a strictly imitative art he has added, yet has infused into its creations the warmer sensibilities of life; to nature he has given all that grace and fancy can bestow, consistent with the sweetest of all charms—leaving her nature still." Yet the merits of this unrivalled artist are not always appreciated at first sight. Sir Joshua Reynolds has the following remarks on this subject: "I remember very well my own disappointment when I first visited the Vatican; but on confessing my feelings to a brother artist, of whose ingenuousness I had a high opinion, he acknowledged that the works of Raphael had the same effect upon him—or rather they did not produce the effect he expected. This was a great relief to my mind; and on inquiry further of other students, I found that those persons only, who from natural imbecility, appeared incapable of ever relishing those divine performances, made pretensions to instantaneous raptures on first beholding them. I found myself in the midst of works executed upon principles with which I was unacquainted; I felt my ignorance, and stood abashed. I viewed them again and again; I even affected to admire them more than I really did. In a short time a new taste, and a new perception began to dawn upon me, and I was convinced that I had originally formed a false opinion of the perfection of the art, and that this great painter was well entitled to the high rank which he holds in the estimation of the world."

The styles of Raphael and of Michael Angelo were perfectly independent of each other. The one painted men as they live, feel, and act, and embodied in his works sentiment, feeling, and passion; the other painted man in the abstract, and exerted his sway over the awful and the sublime. The style of Raphael is characterized as the dramatic; that of Michael Angelo as the epic of painting.

Raphael had numerous pupils, the most celebrated of whom was Giulio Romano. A portion of the frescoes in the Vatican were painted by him from his master's designs, and after the death of Raphael, he executed some remarkable frescoes at Mantua, representing the Fall of the Giants. Giovanni da Udine was Raphael's principal assistant in the execution of the fruits, flowers, and other objects in the arabesques of the Loggia. Other disciples of Raphael carried the principles of that master to different parts of Italy, as Perino del Vago to Genoa, Francesco Penni, surnamed *Il Fattore*, to Naples, Benvenuto Tisio, surnamed *Garofalo*, to Ferrara.

From the death of Raphael, however, may be dated the decline of the Roman school of art. Many efforts were made to revive the former glory, but in vain. One of these efforts was the founding of St. Luke's Academy at Rome, by Muziano, a pupil of Titian. Caravaggio, Contona, Bernini, Sacchi, and Carlo Maratta are some of the names that shone in these latter days of the Roman School.

SECTION 2. VENETIAN SCHOOL OF PAINTING.

This was the great school for colour, and of this school the chief ornament was Titian. But though the school of Venice was one of the earliest in Europe to cherish the reviving arts, we are not indebted to it for any great accession of noble or intellectual subjects. Historical and religious subjects are not so frequently illustrated by its painters as luxurious banquets, lordly senators, and beautiful female forms. From the twelfth century a movement might be distinguished in the arts of Venice, and in the thirteenth century the number of painters had increased so much that a company was formed, and laws and constitutions were made. Antona da Messina introduced oil colours; the Bellinis carried out his views; and the youngest of these was the master of Titian and Giorgione, two of the greatest names of the school. The genius of Giorgione is said to have been great. He was happy in seizing the leading points of leading objects, and also in the breadth and tone of his pictures. This artist died in the prime of life, cut off by the plague. The most eminent of Giorgione's scholars was Sebastian del Piombo. His portraits are very fine, and his historical pictures combine the designs of Michael Angelo with Venetian colour, an instance of which we have already alluded to in the Raising of Lazarus.

The name of Titian is synonymous with the characteristic of his school; and were his reputation to be taken from one picture, he would not rank, as he always does, after Michael Angelo and Raphael. The picture to which we allude is, of course, his *Pietro Martyr*, that grand work of which the Venetian senate were so justly proud that they prohibited any attempt to remove it from Venice, under no less a penalty than death. This picture occupied him eight years. His method of treating the subject is thus described. "The terrific gasping energy of the assassin, who has cut down the monk; the awful prostration of the monk, wounded and imploring Heaven; the flight of his companion, striding away in terror, with his dark mantle against a blue sky; the towering and waving trees, the entrance, as it were, to a dreadful forest; the embrowned tone of the whole picture with its dark azure evening sky, the distant mountains below, and splendid glory above, contrasting with the gloomy horrors of the murder; its perfect, though not refined, drawing, its sublime expression of dreadful light and shadow, and exquisite colour, all united, render this the most perfect picture in Italian art." Titian was, however, deficient in composition and in poetical fancy, and with the exception of the work above alluded to, there is generally something that strikes the connoisseur as faulty in one of these respects. His mastery of colouring is most astonishing. His pictures are generally bathed in a mellow golden light, and those glowing and gorgeous effects which captivate the beholder, seem to be produced by the general management of the whole piece, rather than by the laying-on of brilliant local tints; so that while the gradations of tone are the most delicate possible, yet in their strongest hues they are powerfully contrasted. "The final splendour is effected rather by painting in under-tones than by lavishing on particular spots the whole riches of the palette. The shadows and under-tones also are enlivened by a thousand local hues, and flickering lights, and his masses by innumerable varieties and play of parts, yet all softened, and blended, and combined by an undefinable harmony. Hence nothing more easy than apparently to copy Titian—nothing more difficult than really to imitate his faithfulness and splendour." It was the practice of Titian to lay on his colours pure, without mixing, in tints by reiterated application, and apparently with the point of the pencil.

Tintoretto was a distinguished pupil of this great master, so much so as to excite a mean spirit of jealousy on the part of Titian, who turned him out of the house. Tintoretto immediately endeavoured to strike out a path for himself, by imitating the drawing of Michael Angelo and the colouring of Titian. His execution was free and daring, and from the rapidity of his working, which was almost miraculous, he was called the "lightning of the pencil." He astonished the Venetians, and made his former master tremble, but while he produced grand and imposing pictures, he evinced little regard to delicacy of feeling and true pathos. Meanwhile Paul Veronese was displaying all the magnificence of colouring characteristic of his school, at the same that he was incorrect both in taste and in drawing. Inferior names succeed, such as Canaletti, Sebastian Ricci, and Marco Ricci, but the school of Venice had faded into comparative insignificance soon after the death of Titian, in 1576. He died at the venerable age of ninety-six, or according to some authorities ninety-nine.

SECTION 3. LOMBARD AND PARMAN SCHOOLS OF PAINTING.

We now come to the great model of the Lombard school, Antonio Leti, better known as Correggio. "After Raphael, Titian, Michael Angelo, Da Vinci, and Bartolomeo, who would have thought that another style, independent of either, and unlike everything else in the world, could have burst out? But so it was. Of all the painters that ever lived in the world there is no accounting for Correggio. Unlike Greeks, Romans, and Italians, out he came into the world, in colour, drawing, light, shadow, composition, expression, and form, like nature, and unlike any body else, who ever studied nature at all. Michael Angelo, Raphael, Titian we can trace: we see upon whom they were grafted, when they budded and burst forth. But who is Correggio? Nobody is certain. One declares he was poor, another that he was well off; another says he died of a fever which he caught in consequence of carrying all his money in copper, the price of a picture; another says it was no such thing. There is no certainty that his portrait is in existence; in fact there is as much dispute about it as there is about Shakspeare's; and here are his beautiful works, his *Notte*, his *Catherine*, his *Christ in the Garden*, his *Magdalene*, his

Venus and Mercury, and his *Ecco Homo*, in the National Gallery, the only head of Christ in the world. There is no Christ's head by Raphael which at all approaches it; and the head of Leonard da Vinci in the gallery cannot be endured after it."—*Encyclopædia Britannica*.

Unaccountable as it may appear, Correggio lived and died in ignorance of the great painters of his day, (he was contemporary with Michael Angelo and Raphael,) and in ignorance also of Rome, of the antique, of everything but nature. His most celebrated works are the fresco paintings in the two cupolas of the cathedral churches at Parma, and his easel painting of the Holy Family, called the "Night," which is in the Dresden Gallery. Annibale Caracci, on beholding these works fifty years afterwards, said that everything he saw astonished him, especially the colouring and beauty of the children, who seemed to live, breathe, and smile with so much sweetness and vivacity that he could not help sympathizing with their enjoyment.

The next important name in this school was that of Parmegiano, who exhibited some of Correggio's grace, but blended with it much affectation. His best work is considered to be the Vision of St. Jerome, now in our National Gallery. This artist died, like Raphael, at the age of thirty-seven.

We have thus briefly renoted the characteristics of the four primitive schools, distinguished by the labours of the old masters, the patriarchs of modern art. These schools were all flourishing at the same time, so that an individual might have witnessed the career of all these eminent men and have survived it. As it was with the arts of Greece, so it was with those of Italy; their duration in a state of excellence was extremely brief. "Is it, then," it has been asked, "the fate of the human spirit, like human institutions, to fall away immediately on attaining a degree of perfection? or rather is not this evidence of powers which shall hereafter expand, grow, and unfold their activities, here on earth chilled, and cramped, and broken?"

At the close of the sixteenth century, the decline of art which followed on the death of Correggio, was stayed for a while by the establishment of the academical school of Bologna, founded by the Caracci. This academy was called the *Accademia*, it being a leading principle with its conductors to select what was most excellent and valuable, in each of the primitive schools; *design* from the Florentine, *grace* from the Roman, *colour* from the Venetian, *light and shade* from the Lombard. The idea was admirable, but it was not carried out with corresponding success, though much, very much was done by means of individual talent to shed glory on the undertaking. The Caracci were themselves extraordinary men. Ludovico the eldest had been taught by Tintoretto, and his works were distinguished for simplicity of character, breadth, solemnity, and grace. He instructed his two cousins in the art, of whom Agostino was more remarkable for his engravings than for his paintings, but Annibale excelled in bold and magnificent compositions. The Caracci were the instructors of Domenichino, Guido, Lanfranco, Guercino, and Albano. The Communion of St. Jerome by Domenichino was pronounced by Poussin to be one of the three best pictures in the world; but this artist though an eminent genius, was in most of his works, heavy approaching to dullness. Guido was one of the greatest ornaments of the Bolognese school. His paintings are graceful and beautiful, but they have also their peculiar defects. The expression was too frequently artificial, and his conceptions of beauty, formed from the study of the antique, have too much of sameness and want of individuality. It is thought that those academic abstractions and refinements of precept may be first decidedly marked in the works of this artist, which being formed independently of nature, hastened the downfall of art in the school of Bologna. Guercino is deemed the most original artist of the school, but his forms are vulgar, and he wanted power and individuality. Albano was agreeable and poetic, Lanfranco bold and incorrect. Contemporary with the Caracci, though belonging to no school, were Caravaggio and his pupil Spagnoletto. But we must close our notice of Italian art with one eminent name, already familiar to the readers of our Magazine*; that of Salvator Rosa, the only native landscape painter that Italy has produced, for the landscapes of the old masters, though grand and perfect compositions, are made subservient to the figures. Salvator Rosa is eminently distinguished as a noble and original mind, in a period of decay and bad taste.

SECTION 4. THE TRANS-ALPINE SCHOOLS OF PAINTING.

THE German School is usually considered as German, properly so called, Flemish, and Dutch. Though these distinctions are not based on any characteristic or marked differences of manner, it may be well to adopt them in our notice of German art. Before the age of Albert Durer, the only style discernible in the schools of Germany was the Gothic. Pictures of this style were painted upon wood, usually oak, covered sometimes with canvass, always with a white ground, upon which the outline of the subject was sketched, and the whole overlaid with gilding. This gilding formed the real ground of the picture, which was painted in water or size-colour, with great care and diligence of finish. This early school terminated in the fifteenth century, owing to the more general diffusion of oil painting. But the painters of that school are full of thought, and one in particular, Shoenager, is said to have been copied by Raphael himself. The picture of Christ bearing the Cross, by Shoenager is a magnificent composition, and may be traced in Raphael's famous Spasimo in Spain. Of this school we may likewise name Wohlgemuth, the instructor of Durer, and Muller, or Kranach, burgomaster of Wittemberg, and friend of Luther. But the prince of German artists is Albert Durer, born at Nuremberg, in 1471. Fuzeli says of Albert Durer: "He was a man of great ingenuity, but not of genius. His proportions of the human figure are on a comprehensive principle, founded on nature and the result of deep thinking." A degree of restraint is said to pervade his works, admirable as they are,—a remnant of the Gothic manner, of which the habits of his countrymen and his own ignorance of the antique prevented the removal. His defects are summed up as consisting in want of dignified design, and grandeur of composition, with a hard and meagre outline; his merits, as presenting truth, originality, simplicity of thought, and good colouring. Fuzeli says, that if he approached genius in any part of his art it was in colour; his colour went beyond his age, and as far excelled in truth, and breadth, and handling the oil-colour of Raphael, as Raphael excelled him in every other quality. Contemporary with Albert Durer was Hans Holbein, who came from Basle to England, and died in the service of Henry VIII. Most of his portraits remain in this country. His works are excellent examples of the German School. Lucas von Leyden has been called the Dutch caricature of Albert Durer. The Flemish and Dutch schools were early put in possession of the advantage of oil-colours, and if the Flemish painter, Van Eyck, was not the discoverer, he was at least the means of bringing that mode of painting into general use. But the glory of the Flemish school was Rubens, that wonderful artist whose life and works we propose to sketch in another part of this work. The contemporary masters with Rubens were Van Voss Strada, Miel Savary, Seegers, &c., and the pupils of the great artist were Snyders, Jordaens, Teniers, and Vandyke. The two latter artists have been considered as forming the extremes of the Flemish schools, though in respect of merit they stand in the first rank. Teniers connects the Flemish with the Dutch style, being more elevated than the latter, though less dignified than Rubens. He has painted with exquisite truth and very great beauty of pencil, the customs, scenes, amusements and character of his countrymen. Vandyke again, in the grace and dignity of his portraits, in the intellectuality of his expression and composition, seems to effect a junction between the common and broad nature of the native taste, with the ideal of Italian art. The pictures painted by Vandyke during the early period of his residence in England, are among the finest specimens of portraiture. Here, indeed, in some respects, as the clearness and transparency of his carnations, he is excelled only by Titian—in the graceful air of the heads, and beautiful drawing of the extremities, he reminds us of Raphael, while to these qualities, he has added a silvery tone of pencilling, which, more so than any other master, gives back the delicate and varied hues of real flesh and skin. He has hardly succeeded in history, more, however, from want of practice than genius; for his alleged want of fancy seems not so apparent as has been supposed. In Vandyke we find a most striking proof that excellence in art is founded upon no abstract theory of the ideal, but in selecting, and sedulously adhering to, some one view of nature: hence alone,

The soft precision of the clear Vandyke.

The name of Rembrandt stands at the head of Dutch painters, as Rubens at the head of those of Flanders, though as to rank in the art, Rubens must ever take the lead. Rem-

* See *Saturday Magazine*, Vol. XVII., pp. 178, 218, 224

brandt van Rhyn, in whatever subject he undertook, was unlike all other painters. His style was at once natural and highly artificial—original, yet with a mannerism which runs through all his pictures. Whatever he painted he enriched by his peculiar management of light and shadow. He concentrated the light into one brilliant and dazzling focus, and threw a solemn gloom over all the rest of his picture. A picture of his once seen, there can be no difficulty in recognising other works from the same mysteriously impressive hand. The pupils of Rembrandt were not equal to their master. David Teniers, who owed some of his skill to Rubens, was an extraordinary man, and combined with Rembrandt to form the Dutch school. The principles acted on by these artists were carried into smaller and more delicate productions by David Teniers the younger, Jan Steen, Ostadt, and Cuyper.

The distinctive character of the Dutch school is fidelity, minuteness of finish, and beautiful colouring. Before or contemporary with Rembrandt, who died in 1674, we find many worthy names, such as Both, Hamskirk, Bhergem, Metzger, Blemart, Breenberg, Wynants, Polemberg, Van der Neer, Van der Warf, and in a higher class, Wouvermans, Larr, and Gherard Douw, the most careful of painters.

Painting has been very successfully practised by numerous Spanish artists, yet no regular school of art appears to have existed at any time in Spain. The first name of real eminence is that of Velasquez, who was born at Seville, in 1599. He was equally eminent in historical and portrait-painting, and while his treatment of his subject was masterly and delightful, he disregarded that over-wrought degree of finish which was common with artists of his day. Murillo is another highly distinguished Spanish painter, and his works must be familiar to many of our readers, since our National Gallery and other public collections are enriched by several fine specimens of his skill. The life of this artist has also formed the subject of a separate notice,* so that we need not dwell on his merits here. Other names might be mentioned, but they fall so far below those of the two distinguished artists just spoken of, that we shall here sum up the characteristics of Spanish art, which are, truth of character, natural expression, fine colouring, and correct, but not elevated design.

There are few original traits in French painting, nor can the style of art in France be characterised, as in other nations, by striking distinctions. The most ancient among French works in the art appear to have been on glass, and devoted to the service of religion. These, with a sort of enamel, formed by the fusion of metallic colours with glass, seem to have chiefly prevailed until Francis I., anxious for the improvement of his subjects, brought artists from Italy. Among these was the great Leonardo, who died at Fontainebleau, in the arms of his monarch, in 1524, and before he had exercised his pencil in France.

From the death of Francis to the commencement of the seventeenth century, internal discord and intrigue in France kept the nation back in the career of improvement. The reign of Henry of Navarre was favourable to the arts, but foreigners were sought for, to execute important works, as in former times. The first French master of eminence, Vouet, was born at the latter end of the sixteenth century, and brought forward disciples who supplied the school of that period. In 1594 Poussin was born, and his name forms the glory, not only of that period, but of French art in general. Yet it is scarcely correct to speak of him as a French artist. His taste was formed in Italy, where he lived for twenty years before he was invited to the French court: nor was he to be retained at a distance from his beloved Rome. Tired of court cabals, and of the jealousy of his brother artists, he fled beyond the Alps, and returned no more to his native country. From his close study of antiquity appear to be derived the chief defects of his style. "The characteristics of the works of Poussin," says Meme, "are extreme correctness of form and costume, great propriety in keeping, and the most enchanting simplicity of design. These beauties he derived from constant study and deep knowledge of ancient sculpture. While he thus followed closely one of the sources of excellence, he, however, neglected the other, and in painting the more important—nature. Hence the frequent want of interest, the defects of expression, the cold and sombre colouring; the absence of that breathing similitude, which animates even the subjects of his intense contemplation. But the ancient sculptors were not satisfied with nature at second hand—the great cause of failure in the painter. The perfections of their statues

he transferred to his canvass, forgetting that these were copied from men. In the choice of his subject, and manner of representing its incidents, Poussin has few equals; in his pictures too there is always a most charming harmony of thought—the scene, the figures, the handling, even the forms of inanimate objects in his landscapes, all have an antique air, transporting the imagination into an ideal world. Hence of all those who have made the attempt, Poussin has best succeeded in classical allegory."

In the reign of Louis XIV. honours and rewards fell thickly in the way of artists, through the favour of the sovereign; but these only succeeded in raising a school of imitators and flatterers. The master of this school was Le Brun, an artist of good capabilities, but too artificial, and too systematic in expression. He was quite a despot in French art, and having the favour of the sovereign, was able to lord it over sculptors, painters, and architects. Le Sueur was contemporary with Le Brun, and in many respects his superior. He died in 1655, at the age of thirty-eight. In 1600 Claude Gelec was born in Lorraine, and taking his surname from the place of his nativity, is known by the lovers of landscape painting, as the most favoured of all that have ever attempted that department of the art. This eminent man cannot be claimed by France as one of her artists, for he left that country in his early years, and never returned to it. He first crossed the Alps as the runaway apprentice of a pastry-cook; and was not only self-taught, but had to overcome what seemed at first like a natural incapacity for the art. He has ever stood unrivalled in landscape painting, and to him that department of art owes much of the dignity which now invests it. "The aerial perspective and the liquid softness of the tones in his pictures,—the leafing, forms, and branching of the trees, the light flickering clouds, the transparency of hue, the retiring distances, all make as near approaches to nature as it is possible for art to accomplish." Claude's landscapes, however, are not the representations of existing scenes in nature; they are most frequently the result of his own imagination, or what is termed *heroic landscape*. However beautiful, and however honourable to the talent of the painter, they are, therefore, unpossessed of the charm of reality.

Of the numerous artists which sprang up in France during the eighteenth century, it is unnecessary to say more than that they all exhibited more or less of the principles of the school of Louis XIV. During the sway of Napoleon, the artist David became court painter, and everywhere throughout Europe, with the exception of our own country, was his style introduced and followed. In speaking of this artist we shall do no more than quote the strong language of one well qualified to judge of his merits. "We do not deny David's talent, because it must have required talent to mislead the continent of Europe. In art, David's expression was taken from the theatre, and his actions were borrowed from the opera house; his forms were Roman and not Grecian, and his colour was hideous enough to produce ophthalmia. If he and his pictures, with all he ever designed, and all he ever invented, had not appeared in the world, or having appeared, had been utterly rooted out of it, the atmosphere would be purer. He is a plague spot, a whitened leprosy in painting, that haunts the imagination with disgust." This he had the impudence to say of Rubens. David was not very successful in portraits: his best performances are the numerous likenesses of his imperial patron. Dr. Meme mentions having seen the original sketch for one of these, which was never afterwards touched, being taken under the following interesting circumstances. Napoleon had been occupied the greater part of the preceding day and night in arranging the final operations of the campaign which terminated in the battle of Waterloo. When now past midnight, instead of retiring to repose, the emperor sent for David, to whom he had promised to sit, and who was waiting in an apartment of the Tuilleries. "My friend," said Napoleon to the artist, "there are yet some hours till four, when we are finally to review the defences of the capital; in the meantime, *faites votre possible*—[do your utmost] while I read these dispatches." But exhausted nature could hold out no longer; the paper dropped from the nerveless hand, and Napoleon sunk to sleep. In this attitude the painter has represented him. The pale and lofty forehead, the care-worn features, the relaxed expression, the very accompaniments wear an impress inexpressibly tender and melancholy. With the dawn of the morning Napoleon awoke, and springing on his feet, was about to address David, when a taper just expiring in the socket arrested his eye. Folding his arms

* See *Saturday Magazine*, Vol. XIX., pp. 2, 18.

on his breast, he contemplated in silence its dying struggles. When with the last gleams, the rays of the morning sun penetrated through the half-closed window curtains, "Were I superstitious," said Napoleon, with a smile, "the first object on which my sight has rested this day might be found ominous; but," pointing to the rising sun, "the augury is doubtful—at least, the prayer of the Grecian hero will be accorded,—we shall perish in light!"

SECTION 5. HISTORY OF PAINTING IN ENGLAND.

IN Walpole's interesting work it is shown that before the middle of the thirteenth century, evidences are found of oil-painting in England; and that in the fourteenth, painting on glass, heraldic emblazonments, the illumination of manuscripts, with similar approaches to elegance, were cultivated among our ancestors, by natives of this country. Yet in the period when painting was practised with the greatest success in foreign countries, and had arrived at the period of its greatest splendour, there was such a striking degree of inferiority in the efforts of English art, that the cause was supposed to arise from the nature of the climate, as being unfavourable to the development of talent. This idea has been strikingly disproved by succeeding history, so that we must look for the cause in the history of our nation, in the unpropitious events which have occurred to mar the progress of the fine arts. Civil war, religious dissension, and a rage for nautical enterprise appear to have been the barriers up to the time of Charles I. The early part of the reign of that monarch was most favourable to the arts. He formed a collection of pictures, which was then the most valuable in Europe, and seemed well adapted to guide the national taste, and to become the means of founding a native school. The most eminent artists of the age were invited to his court, and found their labours understood, appreciated, and well rewarded by the king. Foreign nations now propitiated the English court with presents of a very different character from those which had been bestowed on preceding sovereigns. The states of Holland sent Tintorets and Titians; the king of Spain presented the Cain and Abel of John of Bologna, with Titian's Venus des Pardo; and other states courted Charles's favour with similar though less valuable gifts. The king also made most judicious purchases. Through the interposition of Rubens he obtained the Cartoons of Raphael, and, by the negotiation of Buckingham, the collection of the Duke of Mantua, containing eighty-two pictures, principally by Giulio Romano, Titian, and Correggio. The king spent much of his time in the great gallery at Whitehall, where these treasures of art were accumulated. This gallery contained four hundred and sixty pictures, all of them the private property of the king. It was with delight that Charles saw a taste for refinement gradually spreading among his subjects. The nobles imitated him in patronising works of art; and it was not long before a subject earned for himself the appellation of the Scottish Vandyke. This was Jamieson of Aberdeen, to whom the king sat for his likeness, and on whom he bestowed many marks of royal favour. Every essential to the foundation of a British school seemed now accomplished, when the fearful events which closed in blood the reign of the unhappy monarch proved more than usually destructive to the arts; for the stern republican party, in the first burst of its zeal, was especially bent on destroying every semblance of ornamental refinement. In this place we deem it necessary to notice an idea, which appears to us a most erroneous one, *i.e.*, that not only were the puritans of those days, by their mistaken zeal, the enemies of the fine arts, but that Protestantism in general is inimical to the advance of the same. We have lived long enough to see this notion overthrown by the uprising and flourishing of talent in our Protestant nation, and the liberal rewards and honours it has met with; yet something like an agreement with the absurd doctrine may be found in many of our writers. Our Reformers themselves, indeed, were purifiers of religion, not patrons of art; but the war which they waged against the idle decorations, as well as the ceremonies and superstitions, of the church, was one to which duty incited them, and however we may lament the destruction of ancient paintings (though it is doubted whether the paintings destroyed in the English church were worthy of regret,) we cannot justly attribute to the Reformers any other motive than the extinction of idolatrous rites, nor can we blame our purer faith for the temporary check which it gave to the art of painting. Sincerely do we agree with the opinion that the Reformation, by restoring to the human mind the uncontrolled exercise of its own

faculties, by unlocking the barriers by which the will and the powers of free inquiry had been imprisoned, has stamped upon every British institution, as upon every effort of British talent, the worth and the manliness of independent character. The Reformers were, in fact, so far from opposing the progress of painting, that they viewed such accomplishments, when kept in their proper place, with especial favour. Among the ranks of these men were to be found some of the most accomplished minds of which the age could boast. For such men to have been the enemies of well-directed intelligence, of whatever description, would have been to contradict their own principles and practice. Luther was the friend and patron of several artists, and Holbein came to England most warmly recommended by him. The Reformers prohibited the introduction of pictures into churches, but they are not to be stigmatised as if desiring to exclude them from more appropriate situations.

We are glad to find that a modern writer on the Fine Arts has the honesty to state the following opinion, though opposed by the almost universal feeling of his fellows. "Highly as we honour the talent for artisanship, and intimately connected as is the glory of the land with the reputation of its arts, we cannot for one moment entertain the proposal now so generally, we had almost said unblushingly brought forward, of converting our churches into spacious repositories for the productions of the pencil. Here we have explicitly to state an opinion, though opposed by almost every writer on the Arts: first, that neither is the house of God a proper receptacle for pictures; nor, secondly, if every Protestant place of worship were open to such ornaments, is it clear that art would be materially advantaged. Let our sacred edifices be as nobly simple, as massively grand as may be: let them exhibit every beauty of architecture if needful; the effect will elevate, without distracting the mind. But pictures do not seem associated either with the place or with our meditations; with us the only association is that of mere ornament. We might, however, be accused of treating the subject too seriously, were an attempt made to show the sinfulness of abducting even one thought from Heaven, to fix it on a merely ornamental appendage. We shall therefore suppose that in our country, people do not go to church to see pictures, and that, here as elsewhere pictures are painted to be seen. Now, the time of divine service with us is short, and that space is passed without intermission in sacred duties, in prayer, in praise, and in exhortation. Either these momentous engagements or the pictures must be neglected. In a Protestant assembly every one is seated in his place; a picture can be viewed properly from a very few points, perhaps only one. Granting them all the advantages 'of pictures in unison with the feelings of the mind, exemplifying in the most striking manner the objects of its highest admiration and respect,' how limited is the number that could enjoy them! In the Romish ritual external emblems are certainly permitted as stimulants to inward devotion; of these, pictures are among the most favoured. In our faith the symbols are simple as its practice, and too sacred even to be named here. We have no wish, then, to decry the use or advantage of paintings to the Roman Catholic, but it seems sufficiently obvious that to a Protestant they can at best be but useless in a place of public worship."

But we return to our history. Lely was portrait-painter to Charles II., and employed his pencil on the beauties of that luxurious court. Kneller, who in general painted too expeditiously to paint well, has left a fine portrait of Sir Isaac Newton, which surpasses most of his other works. At the same period there were many artists of some merit, as Dobson, Biley, Hoskins, and Cooper, the two latter celebrated as miniature painters, Henry, Highmore, Greenhill, Buckshorn, Jervas, Richardson, Hudson, and others. Hudson was the master of Reynolds, with whom the British school first rises into the dignity of high art.

But previously to this, that extraordinary painter, Hogarth, had appeared, whose peculiar excellences no imitator has at all rivalled. He belonged to no school; he received no instruction. He painted life as he saw it; and a mournful picture of sin and misery do his scenes (comic as many of them are) present to us.

In 1752-3 Sir Joshua Reynolds, on his return from the Continent, commenced those portraits which have established his claim to be considered as the founder of the English school. He was an artist of surpassing talent, gorgeous in tone and colour, unexceptionable in composition, deep in light and shadow, beautiful in character, and the purest of

all painters of children and women. At the commencement of his career he met with such opposition and discouragement as genius is often subjected to, but these he gradually overcame. Of the tameness and insipidity of the style against which he had to contend we may gather some idea from his own description of the artists of his day. "They have got a set of postures which they apply to all persons indiscriminately; the consequence is that all their pictures look like so many sign-post paintings: and if they have a history or a family-piece to paint, the first thing they do is to look over their common-place book, containing sketches which they have stolen from various pictures: then they search their prints over, and pilfer one figure from one print, and another from a second; but never take the trouble of thinking for themselves*."

While Sir Joshua was thus carrying the palm in portrait painting, and could only be followed at a distance by Romney, Opie, Barry, and other contemporary artists, two eminent men were laying the foundation of the English school of landscape; these were Gainsborough and Wilson. The former is acknowledged to be the most decidedly English of all our great masters, and though chiefly excelling in rural scenery, his portraits also showed great genius. Yet Wilson ranks higher in landscape painting than Gainsborough, as being the more imaginative of the two, and his aerial perspective is considered not inferior to that of Claude. The works of Gainsborough have been already noticed in our *Magazine*; (Vol. XIX, pp. 178, 218;) and viewing this artist in the important light of founder of our English school of landscape-painting, we select our illustration from among his well-known productions. Wright was an artist remarkable for exquisite finishing and wonderful effects of light; Morland painted by the force of genius, rather than by means of acquired knowledge; his great excellences lie in the simple representation of common scenes, in which domestic animals form a principal part of the scene, while the back-ground and distances exhibit a true feeling for nature.

Sir Joshua Reynolds was succeeded in the Royal Academy by Benjamin West, of whom Sir Thomas Lawrence, when called to be his successor, thus speaks. "At an era when historical painting was at its lowest ebb, (with the few exceptions which the claims of the beautiful and the eminent permitted to the pencil of Sir Joshua,) Mr. West, sustained by the munificent patronage of his late Majesty, [George III.] produced a series of compositions, from sacred and profane history, profoundly studied, and executed with the most facile power, which not only were superior to any former productions of English art, but far surpassing contemporary merit on the Continent, were unequalled at any period below the schools of the Caracci." West was employed up to his eightieth year in new exercises, and deeper studies. Speaking to Lord Elgin, in 1811, of a late production of his (the artist's) pencil, West declared, that, though at a very advanced period of life, it had been his ambition to introduce those refinements which are so distinguished in the collection of marbles obtained by the noble lord. "Had I been blest," says the artist, "with seeing and studying these emanations of genius at an earlier period of life, the sentiment of their pre-eminence would have animated all my exertions; and more character, and expression, and life, would have pervaded my humble attempts at historical painting†."

The genius of Wilkie does honour to our country, and has raised our domestic school of art to the highest eminence. Scotland boasts the honour of producing this extraordinary man, and Europe mourns his early loss. His life and works have been so recently sketched in our *Magazine*, that it is needless to dwell on them here. But we may notice another Scottish artist of distinguished excellence. Sir Henry Raeburn was born in 1756, and died in 1823. He was originally apprenticed to a goldsmith, and it does not appear that he ever had a single lesson from a drawing-master. Yet he painted miniatures with success during his apprenticeship, and from these smaller works, proceeded to large portraits in oil. These early efforts met with encouragement from Sir Joshua Reynolds, who recommended him to visit Italy.

After spending two years abroad, Raeburn entered on his professional career. His style speaks powerfully to the imagination, through the slenderest means addressed to the

eye. To use the words of an efficient critic, "He has carried the principles of Sir Joshua to the very verge of indistinctness; but what is given has such vigorous meaning, that in the power of the leading forms the fancy discovers an intelligence, which, overspreading the whole composition, and bursting from each master-line, guides the mind triumphantly over the blank masses often composing the interior. If then, to produce strong effect, by whatsoever means, be the object of art, Raeburn has succeeded beyond most painters, but if true excellence consist in blending into one harmonious whole the delicate markings and grand contours of nature, he has failed; if pictures are to be viewed only on the walls of a gallery, at a distance from the spectator, his portraits correspond with this arrangement; but if the eye loves to rest upon features dear to the affections, or prized by the understanding; if it delight to trace the shades of feeling and the lines of thought; if these wishes can be gratified, and are indulged in the master-pieces of art, then does Raeburn, and not only he, but the great majority of the English school, rest far behind." Runciman, and Ramsay, son of the poet, were also eminent in Scottish art, and there are other names of considerable merit, as More, Cochrane, Sir George Chalmers, &c.

Of the artists either now living or but recently taken from us, the English school contains many of great excellence, whose names are so fully before the public at the present time, that we may refer to our annual exhibitions, and the fame accruing from them, as the best guide to the appreciation of their respective merits.

Compared with foreign art the distinctive character of the English school is strongly marked. Painting on the Continent exhibits a striking uniformity of style, with such peculiarities as, on a general view, will not lessen the truth of a common classification. The foreign artist, then, studies to detail, but fails in power of general effect; his performances are more valuable as works of art and imitation, than of imagination or abstract resemblance. The parts are beautifully made out, finely drawn; but the whole is too seldom connected by any animating principle of general similitude uniting the whole. Hence the dry, meagre, and disjointed particulars, the usual components of their labours, though in themselves truer than the constituents of British art—better drawn, it may be, and more carefully finished, yet contrast disadvantageously with the bold and powerful, though large generalisations of our pencil. The English artist paints more to the mind, and the French and Italian to the eye, consequently there is more genius shown by the former than the latter. Art with us represents objects as they seem in their relation rather than as they actually exist; among our rivals it delineates things as they are in themselves, to the neglect of those modifications by which reality is diversified as viewed in reference to a medium of expression such as painting. In the one case nature is seen and imitated as a picture; in the other, her operations and forms are contemplated as materials out of which pictures are to be wrought. Hence English art satisfies, but deceives; the foreign does not deceive, but fails to satisfy.

The great defect in the practice of English art must be admitted to exist in imperfection of details. In portraiture this has spread to a great extent; and with the greatest advantages as to models, the portraits of British females are too frequently decided failures. There is a sad forgetfulness of the principles of Vandyke, or even of our own accomplished Lawrence. In the works of present artists we find too little attempt to imitate the delicacy and transparency of tint remarkable in Vandyke's likeness. Male portraits are better executed than those of females, chiefly from the bolder lineaments of the subjects. Yet we may hope, from recent tokens in the productions of the most esteemed masters, that a more scientific and perfect style is making its way.

In historical pictures, expression has been sadly wanting. Our paintings of this description are likewise defective in composition, not in the symmetrical arrangement and grouping of figures, but in the real poetry of the art, in the facile, the creative power over the means and materials of the science—in the skill of causing them to fall as if by chance, and without effort or visible design, into the most harmonious, most striking, and most effectual combinations.

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* For a notice of Sir Joshua Reynolds and his works, see *Saturday Magazine*, Vol. XIV., pp. 2, 25.

† A notice of Benjamin West and his works, is contained in *Saturday Magazine*, Vol. XVI., pp. 170, 186.